

January 17, 2007

Madame Chairperson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you.

My name is P.J. Rismon; I live in Kalispell and am the guardian of my brother Stewart Rismon, who suffered brain damage at birth and has struggled with developmental disabilities his entire life.

Stewart was a resident at the state institution in Boulder for a number of years before moving to one of the MDSC group homes in Missoula where he has resided for the past 16 years. He currently receives residential, employment, recreational and other services through MDSC.

We members of the developmental disabilities community sincerely appreciate and support the funding increase of \$18 million proposed by the Governor's budget, as well as the \$11.4 million which is intended to address some of the needs of persons on the waiting list.

However, we respectfully encourage and implore the Committee to fund developmental disability programs at the level requested by DPHHS which has conducted a thorough analysis of the costs involved in providing necessary services. Without these important services, the lives of Montanans with developmental disabilities will be dramatically and negatively impacted as nearly all are dependent on the DPHHS programs for every aspect of their lives.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to be heard. Your support of this critical need is warmly appreciated.

With heart-felt sincerity,

P.J. Rismon
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